



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond  
December 17-21, 2012***

## **Kapyong Barracks ruling favours First Nations**

[CBC News](#)

Dec 14, 2012 8:31 AM CST



*The Kapyong Barracks site has been the focus of a dispute between a group of six Manitoba First Nations and the federal government since the base closed in 2004. (CBC)*

Some Manitoba First Nations leaders are celebrating a Federal Court ruling on the sale of the former Kapyong Barracks site in Winnipeg, but it does not

necessarily mean the land will be developed right away.

The court ruled on Thursday that the federal government failed to consult four First Nations, or even communicate properly with them, on the sale of the former Canadian Forces base.

"The court ruling, I think, certainly is a strong one," Chief Glenn Hudson of the Peguis First Nation told reporters on Friday.

"It reiterates our position that we need to be consulted, we need to be accommodated in terms of anything dealing with our rights."

The future of the Kapyong site has been in limbo for years, as the group of First Nations has attempted to secure it as part of a treaty land entitlement (TLE).

In 2004, the land became vacant when the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, relocated to CFB Shilo near Brandon, Man.

In 2007, the federal Treasury Board decided to sell the site to the Canada Lands Co., a Crown corporation that was to oversee the land's re-development and resale.

But that plan was immediately stalled when the group of First Nations asked the Federal Court to overturn that decision.

In September 2009, [Justice Douglas Campbell declared the transfer invalid](#), saying the federal government didn't do enough consultation with First Nations groups, who had outstanding TLE claims.

Ottawa may appeal again, chief warns

Hudson said while the First Nations have won the latest legal fight, the federal government could very well push the case back into court.

"They've appealed it once and I don't expect that they'll shy away that; they will appeal it again," he said.

"We are a people that have a treaty process in place, and we want to sit down and negotiate."

Ottawa has 30 days to appeal the ruling.

In a statement to CBC News, a spokesperson for the Minister of National Defence said the latest Federal Court ruling "does not make a determination on claims to the land."

"We are reviewing the court's decision before making any decision on next steps," the spokesperson said.

Treaty land entitlement claims are intended to settle the debt owed to First Nations who did not receive all the land they were entitled to under historical treaties.

The 90-acre barracks site is located on some of Winnipeg's most valuable property, nestled between Tuxedo and River Heights, two affluent Winnipeg neighbourhoods.

Hudson said the First Nations would prefer to sit down with the government and work out a deal, ideally towards building a mixed commercial and residential development on the Kapyong land.

The tug and pull between the federal government and the First Nations did not involve the swath of homes in the area that used to be residences for soldiers and their families.

## **Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture at the Power Plant: Review**

[Toronto Star](#)

December 16, 2012

Daniel Baird



*COLIN MCCONNELL/TORONTO STAR Co-curator Kathleen Ritter with artist Duane Linklater's Tautology 2011.*

By the time Public Enemy's fierce and incendiary second album, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, appeared in 1988, hip hop was well on its way to becoming the lingua franca of international youth culture.

It should come as no surprise that hip hop had a huge impact on aboriginal youth culture in North America, and shaped the work of a whole generation and more of aboriginal artists, given the political assertiveness of groups like Public Enemy on behalf of those on the ethnic, cultural and economic margins.

"Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture," which will be on view at The Power Plant through May 5, features 23 aboriginal artists from Mexico City to Nunavut whose work has been influenced by hip hop.

The exhibit, co-curated by Kathleen Ritter, associate curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and Tania Willard, a Secwepemc artist, designer and curator, originally appeared in Vancouver last spring.

"Beat Nation really started out as a project that Tania Willard and Skeena Reece were doing for Grunt Gallery in Vancouver; it began as a website," Ritter explained. "They were exploring the importance of hip hop to the younger generation of aboriginal artists. I suggested to Tania that we create a show for the Vancouver Art Gallery around that theme, and at that point we started doing studio visits all over — Mexico, New Mexico, Alaska, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut — looking for interesting connections between artists."

The result is an exhibit that is as diverse and dynamic as hip hop itself or, for that matter, aboriginal identity and culture.

Beat Nation's opening reception on Dec. 14 featured a performance by Vancouver Island-based Tsimshian/Gitksan and Cree multi-disciplinary artist Reece. For *like a boss* (2012), Reece takes on the character of Vito Corleone as played by Marlon Brando in *The Godfather* as well as Sacheen Littlefeather, the native civil rights activist who arrived at the 1973 Oscars in full Apache dress to explain that Brando was refusing his Best Actor award because of the way the film industry treated native Americans.

Reece's subversive and hilarious performances — she likes to think of herself as a "sacred clown" — involve multiple layers of often biting ironies, alluding to both pop culture and aboriginal traditions.

The same might be said of Duane Linklater, an Omushkego Cree artist based in North Bay. *Tautology* (2011) is a bright red neon thunderbird appropriated from a painting by renowned Ojibway artist Norval Morrisseau that once hung in Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Linklater's strikingly beautiful piece at once implies the unity between divergent aboriginal world views, subtly alludes to the ways the Canadian political and cultural establishment has both used and marginalized natives, and serves as a heraldic and very public sign: one can imagine it blazing above Dundas Square.

In the first part of the incredible two-part video *Tsu Heidei Shugaxtutaan* (2008), by Tlingit/Aleut artist Nicholas Galanin, based in Sitka, Alaska, contemporary break

dancer David "Elsewhere" Bernal twists and grooves to traditional Tlingit drums and vocals; in the second part, Tlingit dancer Dan Littlefield, in full ceremonial regalia, moves to electronic beats.

In Galanin's video, Tlingit tradition literally mixes with hip hop, transforming both.

Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Oneida/Oglala Lakota/Luiseno painter Hoka Skenandore combines graffiti and street art with fine art in brightly coloured works on the old vinyl records he has collected since he was a kid, paying tribute to and sometimes mocking movie stars, skateboarders and musicians.

And in Newfoundland Mi'kmaq artist Jordan Bennett's astounding *Turning Tables* (2010), the artist fashioned a functioning turntable and record, the signal instruments and weapons of old school hip hop, out of walnut, oak, and spruce.

When the needle hits the elegant wooden record, it plays Bennett learning his native Mi'kmaq on one side and, on the other, eerie music created by the rings of the tree from which the record was made. *Turning Tables* spins from hip-hop symbolism to the attempt to recuperate tradition to the ancient land itself.

The artists in "Beat Nation: are by no means outside the artistic main stream: like hip hop, art of the past few decades has been all about sampling, mixing, appropriating and intertwining street level popular culture with tradition.

American artist Christian Marclay's monumental *The Clock* (2010), which was on view at the Power Plant through Nov. 25, is, after all, built up entirely of countless clips from films dating back to the 1920s, and Marclay himself started out in the 1980s as a DJ.

Ritter also points out that the work in "Beat Nation," though not what is usually thought of as traditional native art, is by no means a break with tradition.

"Aboriginal history," Ritter said, "has always been about adaptation and change."

## Urban aboriginal gathering place on the move

### [CBC News](#)

Dec 14, 2012 6:25 PM ET



*Odawa Native Friendship Centre's president John Henri Commanda and acting executive director Alison Tranter discuss the centre's future move.*

Without an increase to its core funding over previous years, Odawa Native Friendship Centre's facility on Stirling Avenue has

become too expensive to maintain so the group is looking for a new home.

After serving 16 years as a meeting place for Ottawa's urban aboriginal population, hosting everything from powwows to exercise classes, Odawa president John Henri Commanda and acting director Alison Tranter say they had to sell the 80-year-old former school building.

"It has been good for us for all these years, but it's time to move on and move with the times I guess," said Tranter who wants the replacement space to accommodate the centre's unique range of activities.

"Because we're not offices and desks."

The friendship centre's executive wants to move somewhere central but with growing aboriginal populations in other parts of the city, like Vanier, several options are being considered.

"We may look at parachuting some of the programs to different parts of the community as a possibility in the future," said Commanda. "But at this point no final decisions have been made as to where we're going to relocate to."

The centre is finalizing the sale of its current digs to an Ottawa buyer, but further details of the deal remain confidential. The executive did note that Odawa has to be out of the Stirling building by August 2013 and remains hopeful that it can announce the new location early in the new year.

For Metis teen Sky Provost, a regular at Odawa, the friendship centre is a big part of her Ottawa community.

"It's a very welcoming place and everyone gets together," Provost said. "There's lots of community programs that go on and there's lots of support here."

## First Rideau Hall portrait by Aboriginal artist revealed

[Ottawa Citizen](#)



December 17, 2012 12:02 PM  
Shaamini Yogaretnam

*Portrait of John Ralston Saul unveiled at Rideau Hall by artist Kent Monkman.  
**Photograph by:** Julie Oliver, The Ottawa Citizen.*

OTTAWA — The first portrait of a former governor general's spouse painted by an Aboriginal artist was revealed Monday

morning. It features Saul launching a red kayak into an unseen body of water.

John Ralston Saul, husband of the 26th Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson, has commissioned a portrait of himself to hang in Rideau Hall painted by a highly respected Aboriginal artist who is most notably known for landscape paintings that include highly sexualized images.

The artist, Kent Monkman, is what Elizabeth Kalbfleisch, an art history lecturer at McGill University, calls a “rock star” among those who study aboriginal art history. More of her students submitted term papers on the artist of Swampy Cree, English and Irish descent this semester than ever before, but that doesn’t mean she wasn’t surprised when she heard about the commission.

“It’s certainly a departure for the kind of work that he does,” Kalbfleisch said.

Monkman — a member of the Fish River Band in Manitoba — is perhaps best known for painting scenes that almost look like they came from the pages of a history book, depicting settler populations and their interactions with Aboriginal communities. Yet one of those paintings depicts a First Nations man spanking a bare-buttocked Mountie. Another shows Plains of Abraham combatant General Wolfe with Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Monkman’s alter ego who is wearing pink platform heels and is about to cut off Wolfe’s long hair.

“What Monkman does and does so well is really embrace the idioms of art history, of history painting and landscape painting, and re-imagines how some of those scenes and the conventions of those forms could come from an Aboriginal perspective,” Kalbfleisch said.

Though he may be critical of the history, his work really is a testament to how much he loves the tradition, she said.

Often depicting men in sexual positions with each other, Kalbfleisch says Monkman tries to bring a more historically accurate fluid sexuality back into understandings of Aboriginal sexuality that were largely colonized and imposed by settlers.

“He brings representations of that sexuality back into his work and it’s often seen as sort of a campy way, but there is a serious issue about representation that is at the heart of the humour and the camp that is part of his work,” Kalbfleisch said.

“How this is going to translate to portraiture, I’m not sure,” she laughed. “But I look forward to seeing that.”

Saul’s selection of Monkman is fitting because both he and Clarkson have been staunch supporters of Canadian art, but to choose an Aboriginal artist, who critiques the images of the official record of Canada means a lot for Canadian culture, Kalbfleisch said.

Rideau Hall, the official residence of each Governor General, has had a tradition of collecting and displaying portraits — an idea first suggested by the wife of a governor general in 1898. Originally, portraits of only the governors general were commissioned, but portraits of their spouses were soon added to the collection, as



long as spouses were willing to commission the work themselves and then offer the pieces as gifts to the collection and to all Canadians. The official portraits of all former governors general are commissioned and paid for by the National Capital Commission.

Monkman has shown exhibits at numerous galleries and museums across the country. His work is included in both private and public collections.

The portrait was unveiled in a ceremony hosted by Gov.-Gen. David Johnston. Saul and Monkman were in attendance.

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## Pickton report highlights broken state of aboriginal culture

[Postmedia News](#)

December 18, 2012

Christie Blatchford



*Missing Women's Inquiry Commissioner Wally Oppal. **Photograph by:** Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press, Postmedia News*

There is a “tragedy of epic proportion” in this country all right, but it isn’t the one cited in the enormous, expensive and weirdly cloying report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, better known as the Pickton inquiry.

That 1,448-page monster report was delivered in Vancouver this week by commissioner Wally Oppal.

Pickton, of course, is the serial killer Robert (Willie) Pickton, who for years lured women from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside — many of them drug addicts or street sex workers — to his Port Coquitlam, B.C., pig farm.

Though he was a suspect from as early as 1998, Pickton wasn’t charged until almost four years later. When he was convicted on six counts of second-degree murder in 2007, 20 other murder charges were stayed.

Oppal, a former B.C. attorney-general, came to some predictable and already pretty well-established conclusions — that the Vancouver Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police botched investigation of the missing women for years and that their

disappearances were ignored or downplayed, in the first instance, because the cops assumed they were transients prone to just disappearing.

Like most good Canadians, the commissioner meant well.

His worthy intentions are evident in the report's title (Forsaken) and the sophomoric collage of words ("joyful, brave, loved, compassionate, mother, caring," etc., etc.) that adorn the cover and are meant to recognize the murdered women as the complete and complicated human beings they were.

Oppal also offers the conventional Canadian solution mix of mea culpa (from the various police forces who dropped the ball), prescriptions for healing (even, God help me, the hiring of cultural and sex-trade advisors for the police) and sweeping institutional change that would, if implemented, cost the moon, rather like the inquiry itself, which as of last August had already cost \$7.85-million, a goodly slice of that for lawyers and commission staff.

But the real tragedy in Canada is something that informs this report and so many others across the land — the crisis that is the broken state of aboriginal culture.

That grim reality makes itself felt in the Pickton report.

Oppal correctly notes numerous times aboriginal women are disproportionately represented both among the impoverished, battered women of the Downtown Eastside and among the list of missing and murdered women.

While only 3 per cent of B.C.'s population is Aboriginal, aboriginal women made up 33 per cent of the disappeared and dead, as by other measures they make up about 10 per cent of all female homicides in Canada.

The report includes mini-profiles of almost six dozen women — the most common numbers of the missing and murdered used in recent years. For the aboriginal women in particular, these profiles paint a ghastly portrait of a culture that is pathologically ill.

These stories, many written by family members, have many common elements: Alcoholism and drug addiction; fetal alcohol spectrum disorder repeating itself as a generational issue; physical and sexual abuse in the family; involvement of the child-welfare system; the prevalence of mental illness, such as schizophrenia; families rent by shocking violence, such as suicide and murder.

At various times, the same awful tale leaks out in dribs and drabs at various inquiries elsewhere in the country.

In Winnipeg right now, it is doing just that at two separate probes examining the killings of aboriginal youngsters who died at the hands of their mothers (in one case, with her violent partner), but who before their deaths, just like the Downtown Eastside women, had disappeared into inept Canadian bureaucracies, with no one much appearing to notice.

Both young women in Winnipeg came from shattered families where violence, abuse and profound dysfunction were the norm. Both were demonstrably dangerous



parents, yet both were allowed and encouraged to “parent,” in the name of family reunification, with disastrous results.

Both women were failed twice — as vulnerable youngsters themselves, then as young parents in charge of vulnerable youngsters.

As wards of the state, and then as parents whose children were ostensibly being watched over by the state, the two women are part of an absolutely shattering statistic: Of Manitoba’s approximately 9,000 children who are in care, 8,000 are aboriginal.

Commenting on the tragic state of aboriginal culture wasn’t Oppal’s mandate. Neither is it the job of the child-welfare inquiries. And let’s be frank: There is little appetite, either in institutional Canada or among Canadians, for the full conversation.

Both sides, it seems, prefer the minute examinations of narrow systems failures — policing there, child welfare here, tomorrow the prison system or mental-health patchwork — with their demands for apologies and calls for healing, with resolute avoidance of the awful big picture.

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## Manitoba First Nations demand apology for racist comments

[CBC News](#)

Dec 18, 2012 10:26 AM CST

Manitoba's aboriginal leaders are outraged with provincial Progressive Conservative Leader Brian Pallister over his refusal to publicly condemn racist comments made by a party member.

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has already cancelled a meeting with Pallister in the wake of comments by Braydon Mazurkiewich, who was president of the PC Party's youth wing.



*Braydon Mazurkiewich resigned on Friday as president of the PC Party's youth wing after he posted Facebook comments calling aboriginal people 'freeloading Indians.'* (Facebook)

Nepinak is calling on Pallister to give a full public apology to Manitoba's First Nations citizens, after Mazurkiewich [called aboriginal people "freeloading Indians" on Facebook on Friday](#).

At the time, Mazurkiewich was responding to a [Federal Court ruling that favoured](#)

[First Nations regarding the future of Kapyong Barracks](#), a former Canadian Forces site in Winnipeg.

"That was built for hardworking men and women of the military, not freeloading Indians," Mazurkiewich posted on his Facebook page.

Just hours later, Mazurkiewich resigned as the youth wing president. However, he remains a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, spokesman Mike Brown confirmed to CBC News on Tuesday.

Nepinak says he believes Mazurkiewich's resignation from the party executive was simply an exercise in political correctness, so he wants Pallister to take a strong stand against the comments.

"This racist reaction that he has caused requires immediate treatment," Nepinak wrote in a letter to Pallister's office. "A real solution cannot be superficial or merely reactionary.

"In light of this, I have instructed my staff to cancel a meeting scheduled tomorrow with you and your office.

"This gesture, however, is not intended to paint the entirety of the Progressive Conservative Party with one brush but rather to put your party on notice that a full public apology is expected to First Nations citizens of Manitoba."

[Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson](#) and some aboriginal veterans groups are also urging Pallister to speak out against Mazurkiewich's comments.

As well, the Southern Chiefs Organization has written to Pallister, demanding a public apology.

"Your silence on this appalling display of hatred reflects negatively on your entire party membership and Conservative members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba," SCO Grand Chief Murray Clearsky wrote in his letter to the Tory leader.

### **Issue is dealt with, says party**

Pallister has not responded to a request for an interview. Brown said the issue is behind them, noting that Mazurkiewich's comments are strictly his own.

"This was dealt with by the party president and was a party issue. If this had been a caucus member Pallister would have stepped forward to deal with it," Brown wrote in an email.

"Because it was a party matter the party president dealt with it."

Brown also added that Nepinak seemed OK with that. The Tories cited comments the grand chief made shortly after Mazurkiewich submitted his resignation.

"The Grand Chief had commented in a Canadian Press story saying he applauded the Tories for their swift action," the party stated in a release Tuesday afternoon.

"We understand the grand chief has other commitments and look forward to meeting with him in the new year."

## **Plight of Pikangikum native reserve spurs Toronto relief effort**

### **Poor housing, high youth suicide rate among major problems**

[CBC News](#)

Dec 20, 2012 5:00 AM ET

Jennifer Clibbon



*In 2011, the Ontario coroner released a report highlighting the high youth suicide rate on the Pikangikum First Nation reserve in northern Ontario. The reserve is also facing a housing crisis. (John Woods/CP)*

Like many people, Bob White first heard about Pikangikum First Nation after the release of a provincial coroner's report in 2011 that documented the alarming youth suicide rate in this remote Ojibway community in northwestern Ontario.

Between 2006 and 2008, there were 16 suicides by hanging, some by children as young as 10 years old. In the last decade, more than 60 young people have killed themselves in this small community of about 2,400, where most of the population is under the age of 25.

There is 90 per cent unemployment, a severe housing shortage – and most homes have no indoor toilets or running water.

Circumstances similar to these in Attawapiskat, another Ontario reserve, compelled Theresa Spence, chief of the Attawapiskat First Nation, to undertake a hunger strike. Her protest is meant to raise awareness of the conditions on reserves and get a meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper to discuss native rights. Spence has gone more than a week without eating.

An engineer with Mi'kmaq ancestry, White had spent a career working in developing countries like Mexico and India. He wanted to help Pikangikum, but understood it wasn't going to be easy.

"First Nations people haven't had a great experience of white men bearing gifts," he said.

**'First Nations people haven't had a great experience of white men bearing gifts.'** — *Bob White, an engineer leading relief efforts for Pikangikum native reserve*

It didn't take long for White, 67, to discover that conditions in this fly-in community are as tough as they come.

In a place where temperatures can drop to -40 Celsius, homes are heated by wood stoves in winter. This fall, shortages of fuel for generators that heat community buildings forced the school to close and teachers to leave temporarily.

Mould problems in the elementary school forced its closure last year, resulting in 700 kids having to repeat a year.

Gas huffing is common among young people. And there can be hunger, because the cost of food in the town's single store is several times what you'd pay in the south.

Front yards serve as graveyards, where people bury their dead.

"It's desperate, and I have been all over the world," White said.

### **Looking to make 'real change'**

White wanted to offer practical help, so he set up the Toronto-based Pikangikum Working Group, which brings together professionals, many of them engineers, who offer concrete expertise.



*Toronto-based engineer Bob White, who has Mi'kmaq ancestry, is spearheading a relief effort for the Pikangikum First Nation. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)*

"I don't want to be part of a feel-good [project]. I want to be part of real change," he said.

Among his plans is the establishment of a small lumber mill where locals can be trained to cut wood and build houses. He wants to build a greenhouse, so they can grow their own food again. He

wants to set up more water cisterns, so there's clean water readily available. White made contact with a Pikangikum elder and former chief, Gordon Peters, who spoke to him emotionally via Skype about the needs of his community.

One of White's recruits is David Steeves, a retired IBM executive and engineer based in Toronto who owns a plane and has a track record of volunteering among First Nations communities in the north.



"It's not all about Attawapiskat," Steeves said, referring to the James Bay community that attracted international media coverage last winter because of its acute housing shortage.

In 2011, Steeves and volunteers gathered 4,000 pounds of clothes and bedding and hired a truck to drive it to Pikangikum in time for Christmas Eve.

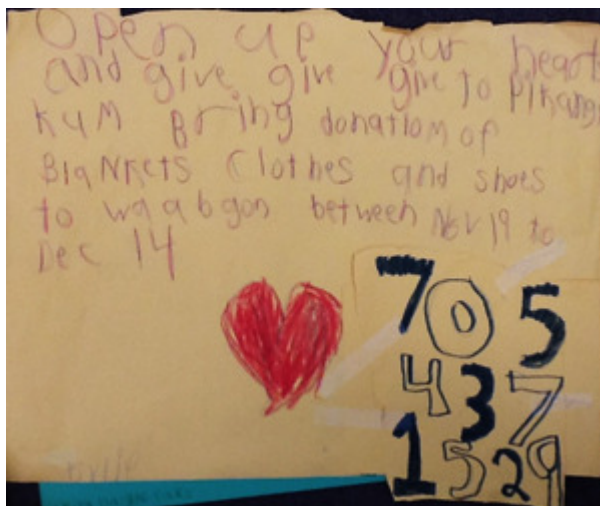
But he wants to do much more. "We need to understand the infrastructure issue. They need infrastructure, so they can thrive," he said.

### **'A question of trust'**

This summer, White got into Steeves' Cirrus four-seater plane and the two men flew to Pikangikum.

When they arrived, the band council was headed out of town. "They forgot we were coming," White said.

"We were walking along, and up came a cute little girl in a dirty dress. I thought she was going to give us a hug. Instead, she picked up a rock and threw it. It said to me, there's a question of trust. It was a sad moment," said Steeves.



*This is one of several posters created by elementary school students at the Waabgon Gamig First Nation on Georgina Island in support of the Pikangikum reserve. (Courtesy of Georgina Marucci)*

"Then I saw the gravestones everywhere. [Pikangikum] is our backyard. This is only 28 hours from Toronto," he said.

To date, the only tangible result of White's efforts is the clothing donation. Steeves is organizing it again this year with the help of the provincial police and a teacher named Gina Marucci and her elementary school students at the two-

room Waabgon Gamig First Nation on Georgina Island. They have put together posters and radio advertisements in support of Pikangikum.

The kids hear about Pikangikum's full cemeteries and hardships.

"They say it's not fair that the dead are buried in their front yards, and how sad it must be to go out each day and see that. They are shocked that there's only one store, and about the cost of things, and how there's no work," Marucci said.

### **Wait-and-see attitude**

As for the residents of Pikangikum, there is a wait-and-see attitude among the band council. As one band member, Kenneth Strang, said in a telephone interview, "People come this way, with good ideas. They come and go. They ask what we need, and we told them."

Strang said that what the community needs most urgently is "warm jackets, ski pants, clothes."

When faced with criticism from the band council, White is relentlessly optimistic. He says he's committed to Pikangikum.

"How do you say anything to hundreds of years of repression? You can't say anything. You have to act. We're committed to change. People are lining up to make a difference," said White.

Asked why he and others stay in these remote and troubled communities, the answer, Strang said is obvious – it's home and they feel a connection to the wide open land.

"People up here are attached to nature and the beauty and to a land untouched by forestry and mining. People here can still roam free."